

2019 . VOLUME 66 . NUMBER 1

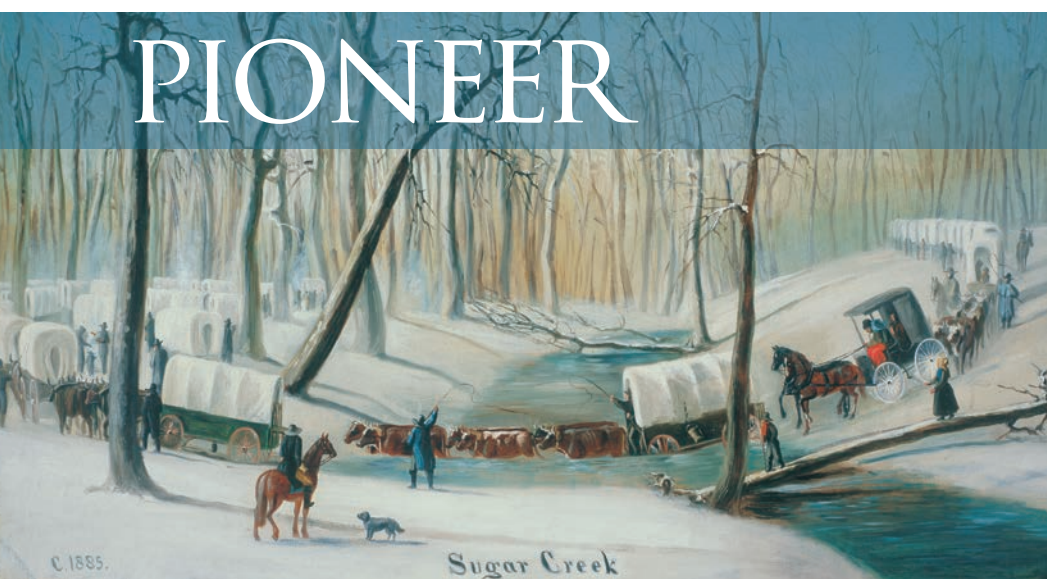
PIONEER

Introducing

A NEWLY REDISCOVERED
22-FOOT PAINTED
PANORAMA BY
C. C. A. CHRISTENSEN

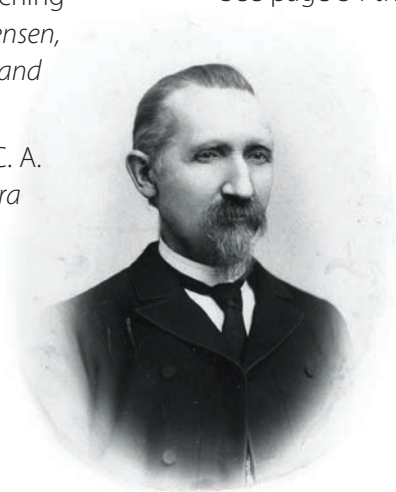
PUBLISHED BY THE SONS OF UTAH PIONEERS

PIONEER



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Pioneer magazine is honored to have been asked by the Church History Museum to help bring to

public view a recently discovered series of historic paintings by pioneer artist C. C. A. Christensen. A Danish convert and pioneer settler of Sanpete County, Utah, Carl Christian Anton Christensen immigrated in 1857 with the 7th Handcart Company. Christensen is now recognized as the greatest pioneer painter of his time. His best-known art captures the span of early Latter-day Saint history from the founding events and persecutions of the Church to the pioneer migration into the American West by wagon train and handcart.

Christensen was an artist, poet, writer, publisher, and composer—and throughout his varied works, he was a storyteller. Forgoing static landscapes and still-lives, he painted epic scenes rich with movement. He is most noted for *Mormon Panorama*, his huge 6.5-by-175-foot canvas scroll depicting twenty-three scenes from early Church history. He toured the western United States with this scroll, sharing his unshakable faith. He used his pictures to teach and often accompanied his formal narration with his own poems and hymns. Christensen also painted murals for the Manti and St. George temples and twice returned to Scandinavia as a missionary.

In this issue we are privileged to introduce *Pioneer* readers to an even earlier scroll painted by Christensen, a smaller and more portable scroll used by missionaries to teach Native Americans about the Restoration. Descendants of the missionaries who originally used the scroll preserved it and recently facilitated its acquisition by the Church.

Recently, while traveling through Denmark, my wife and I made the

pilgrimage to Frederiksborg Castle to view twenty-three Carl Bloch paintings in the King's Praying Chamber there. In Copenhagen we walked the wharf where the bronzed statue of Hans Christian Anderson's Little Mermaid still looks to sea for her sailor. And we visited the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts where Bloch and Anderson's contemporary, C. C. A. Christensen, studied his craft. In the Copenhagen Denmark Temple we saw a beautiful mural painted by artist Joseph Brickey depicting many of Denmark's most influential leaders and artists, including sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen and painters Bloch and Christensen.

As you read this issue of *Pioneer* you will get to know much more about C. C. A. Christensen, the man believed by some to have given up his art for his faith. Instead you will discover a man who dedicated his art to his faith—a devoted disciple with an enduring legacy. ▣

ANTHONY C. TIDWELL
SUP NATIONAL PRESIDENT 2019

SPECIAL THANKS to Alan

Johnson, Church History Museum director; Carrie Snow, manager of Collections Care at the Church History Museum; LDS Philanthropies; and the generous donors whose contributions made it possible for the Museum to acquire the Christensen scroll. Thanks to the Virginia and Gary Hipwell family for being stewards of this priceless work of art; Steven L. Olsen for his research; and Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Church Historian Emeritus, whose network helped secure this donation. We also appreciate the support of Elder Steven E. Snow, Church Historian, and Elder Legrand R. Curtis Jr., who will serve as Church Historian following Elder Snow's release in June.



Additional authors and contributors to the story of the *Huntington/Lamanite Scroll* include left to right: Scott R. Christensen, Laura Allred Hurtado, R. Devan Jensen, Robert C. Freeman, Daren Parry, Melody Parry, Micah Christensen, and Andrea Radke-Moss.

C. C. A. Christensen (1831–1912), *Leaving Missouri*,
c. 1878, tempera on muslin, 78 1/8 x 114 1/8 inches.
Brigham Young University Museum of Art, gift of the
grandchildren of C.C.A. Christensen, 1970.



CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN



The Pioneer Era's Artist-Historian

BY BOB FOLKMAN

The best-known artist of the Latter-day Saint pioneer era is undoubtedly the Danish handcart pioneer Carl Christian Anton Christensen. Throughout his life he was known as Carl to family and friends, but he is most often identified today by his distinctive signature, C. C. A. Christensen.



C. C. A. was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1831, joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1850, and emigrated to the United States and Utah with a company of mostly Scandinavian Saints in 1857. He and Elise Scheel,

his Norwegian-born wife of less than a year, settled in Sanpete County where he made his living as a farmer, house painter, and handyman—even after his talents as an artist, writer, and historian were recognized. As he developed both practical and artistic abilities, his deeply-held testimony and commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ were his primary motivations.

It has been suggested that C. C. A. Christensen was not an artist who painted historical scenes as much as he was a historian who used art to preserve a historical record. Twenty-two years after he and Elise crossed the plains with the 7th Handcart Company, Christensen hinted at his understanding of his artistic calling: “The old generation who bore the burdens of the day in the persecutions in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois will no longer be with us a few years hence. History will preserve much, but art alone can make the narrative of the suffering of the Saints comprehensible for posterity.”¹

Carl, the oldest of four sons, showed early promise in both writing and artistic expression. Although his parents were often in a state of poverty, they arranged for him to attend a combined boarding school and orphanage that had a good reputation. At age fourteen Carl was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker, but his artistic skills were noticed by a wealthy widow who sponsored Carl for admittance to the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. He was apprenticed there for five years to a landscape painter, Carl Rosent.

In 1850 Christensen’s mother, Dorothea, a woman of lifelong faith, met missionaries

from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was baptized. Her four sons followed her example shortly thereafter. In 1853, and at the age of twelve, her youngest son left for America with a company of Saints. Dorothea and two other sons immigrated

to Utah in 1854, while Carl remained for a short time at the Royal Academy. Dorothea passed away in Salt Lake City in 1855 and is buried there. Carl’s father, Mads, remained in Denmark and died there in 1860.

After leaving the Royal Academy in 1852, C. C. A. served as a missionary in Denmark and later in Norway, where he first met the young woman who would become his wife, Elise Rosalie Sternbiem Scheel, and where he also met and taught the gospel to the artist Danquart Anthon [Dan] Weggeland, who, like Carl, had attended the Royal Danish Academy. Dan joined the Church and came to Utah in 1862, where he and Christensen were frequent artistic collaborators. After serving these two missions, C. C. A. married Elise in 1857 on board the *Westmoreland*, the sailing ship that would carry more than 500 Scandinavian Saints to the United States. After the handcart journey from Iowa City to Utah, the Christensens settled near two of Carl’s brothers in Sanpete County, first living in Fairfield, then in Mt. Pleasant.

The demands of making a living and providing for his large family required most of Carl Christensen’s energy during his first decade in Utah, and indeed throughout his life. He and Elise had seven children by 1874. In 1865 he went again to Norway



DOROTHEA CHRISTIANE
THRANUM CHRISTENSEN



to serve a three-year mission. After returning to Utah in 1868, and while living in Mt. Pleasant, he met Maren Pedersen who had recently arrived in Ephraim from Norway. She became his second wife in November. They had an additional seven children, five of whom lived to adulthood.

In the spring of 1870 Carl moved his family to Ephraim, where they remained the rest of their lives. But his farm in Ephraim was too small to produce enough to meet the family's needs, leading Carl to acquire additional land in an inexpensive area called Manasseh, southwest of Ephraim. As opportunities arose he earned additional income for his family by painting homes and barns and by laying bricks. He and his friend Weggeland painted scenery for theatres—and murals for three pioneer-era temples, Manti, St. George, and Logan.

As his artistic skills began to be recognized, Christensen received a commission from Dimick Huntington, who had been set apart as a missionary to Native Americans in the Utah Territory and who was the leading translator during interactions between Church leaders and members of local Indian bands. Huntington asked Christensen to paint a series of pictures of biblical and Book of Mormon events that could be used in teaching native peoples the restored gospel. Huntington wanted the pictures to be painted on a scroll that could be rolled to expose one image at a time while Huntington or his fellow missionary, George Washington Hill, explained gospel principles to audiences. This relatively small vertical scroll, measuring eighteen inches by twenty-two feet, was used extensively by the two missionaries during the decade of the 1870s. While Christensen did not give a formal name to the scroll or its artwork, it is officially referred to today as *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*. Its fascinating story is told in this issue of *Pioneer* in the articles “It is Priceless” and “Like Fire in the Dry Grass.”

As a result of the effectiveness of this scroll-based teaching technique, C. C. A. Christensen developed a much larger scroll during the late 1870s

that he himself would use to explain the history of the Church to audiences throughout the settlements in Utah and in neighboring territories—audiences that were often comprised of Scandinavian settlers whose knowledge of Church history was limited. C. C. A. earned a modest income from these presentations that were generally held during the winter months when little could be done on his Sanpete County farm. The dimensions of the paintings on this second scroll were almost mural-like at 7 feet by 10 feet and were painted on heavy linen. The resulting scroll, called *The Mormon Panorama*, was 175 feet long. One of Christensen's brothers would travel with him to help manipulate the heavy scroll during





"HARVEST SCENE IN EPHRAIM," 1904
BY C.C.A. CHRISTENSEN; COVER OF *UTAH
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY*, 78:1 (WINTER 2010)

the presentations where it was hung over ropes suspended between two portable tripods.

Both scrolls became "lost"—or more accurately "forgotten"—after the period of their primary use in the 1870s and 1880s. But while the historical importance of the paintings on the scrolls was not fully understood by their separate caretakers during these "lost" years, they were preserved for decades and eventually found their way into museums affiliated with the Church. *The Mormon Panorama* paintings are owned by the BYU Museum of Art; in 1970 the paintings were separated and mounted individually for an exhibit at the prestigious Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. *The Mormon Panorama* is now widely recognized for its vigorous style and bright colors, the vitality of its human figures, and its unique portrayal of historical scenes from the settling of the American West.² The more recently recovered scroll, *Untitled*, is in the possession of the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City and is presented to the public in this issue of *Pioneer* by permission.

Nationally known art historian and critic Jane Dillenberger tried to put an exclamation point on the importance of C. C. A. Christensen's paintings when she wrote, "Christensen's significant paintings are as expressive to me as they are to Mormons. Indeed, I believe that I, and historians of American art, value them more highly than do the Mormon people for whom they were made."³

Throughout his life, Carl Christian Anton Christensen was an intelligent and capable student;



he became an equally capable writer, poet, and teacher. His articles in the Danish language periodical *Bikuben* were beloved by the Scandinavian citizens of the Utah territory, and especially in his home county of Sanpete, where as many as two-thirds of the settlers were from Scandinavia. His writing had a familiar, often humorous, and sometimes satirical ring, and a commonly heard phrase in his home town was, "Jo, jo, CCA har sagt det," which translates as "Yes, yes, CCA has said it."⁴ He eventually became the editor of *Bikuben*. He wrote the history of the Scandinavian Mission with Church historian Andrew Jenson, translated English-language hymns into Danish, and wrote original hymns in his native language. It is reported that some of his Danish hymns are still in use in Denmark today.

Carl served a final mission to Denmark in 1887-89, during which he edited the periodical *Scandinaviens Stjerne* [*Scandinavian Star*]. His testimony of the restored Church of Jesus Christ never wavered, and for sixty years, in both English and Danish, he was an inspiring speaker and writer on gospel subjects. During the last decade of his life he taught art and Danish at the Sanpete Stake Academy that became Snow College in Ephraim.

C. C. A. Christensen passed away in Ephraim in 1912 at the age of 81 and is buried there alongside his two wives, one of his brothers, and many other family members. ▣

1 C. C. A. Christensen, in *Bikuben*, 20 Mar 1879.

2 Carl Carmer, "A Panorama of Mormon Life," in *Art in America*, (May-June 1970): 54.

3 Jane Dillenberger, "Mormonism and American Religious Art" in *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels*, 187-200.

4 William Mulder, "'Man kalder mig Digter': C. C. A. Christensen, Poet of the Scandinavian Scene in Early Utah," *Utah Humanities Review* 1:10.

From the Diary of Frederick Kesler

Baptism of American Indians at Dimick B. Huntington's Property



March 15, 1875:

"Went to D. B. Huntingtons to select a place for the Baptising of the Lamanites which he wants near his Dwelling[,] there seems to be quite a stir amongst the Lamanites[.]"

March 18:

"I attended a council in our School House. It was with the Indians[,] & Pst. Young, D. H. Wells & George Q. Cannon were present. D. B. Huntington was interpreter. the indians manifest a desire to go to farming & of living more as we do[.]"

March 19:

"Prst Young & his Councilers met in council with the Lamanites in our ward School House[,] 50 or 60 indians were present[,] a few of our Brethern were presant[,] a Small panarama got up by D. B. Huntington was exhibited commencing with adam & eve in the garden of Eaden with several interesting circumstances or insidences which transpired from then until the time that the angle moroni delivered the plates unto Joseph Smith. each picture was Explained unto them. They were very mutch interest[ed]. Pst. Young gave them some verry timely & good Council . . ."

"From March 20–25, he secured materials, pipes, and carpentry help to construct the "Indian house & font," filling the font "without difficulty."

March 28:

"At 10 ocl[ock] I met Bp E. Hunter G Busker & several others as well as my council at CD. B. Huntingtons

for the purpose of Dedicating the Font which I had recently constructed for the Baptising of Lamanites[.] Br Wallace offered up the Dedication prayer after which we had short speeches from Bp. Hunter, Br Wallace and myself after which I visited our Sunday school whare 220 ware in attendance.

"The font that's made was constructed of plank 2 in[,] in thickness & was 8 feet long & 5 feet wide & 3 feet 2 in[,] deep in the clear pure spring water was conveyd in to it by galvanized cross pipes 10 Rods & also had an overflow pipe to carry off the water after rising so high which was to the Depth of 3 feet ½ in. A house was erected over it with a room therein for the people to dress & undress in[,] I placed the font lengthen's East & west & so that the man that officiated would stand with his face to the South so that he would lay the candidate when Buried in the water east & west with thare head to the west being a similitude of the graves which lies the same way & when raised from eather our faces are towards the East whare all light come from[,] this being the first Font build & Dedicated by the Holy priesthood for the Baptising of the remnants of Jacob in this last dispensation & by myself[.]" ■

Source: Diary of Frederick Kesler, 1874–1877, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, online. Thanks to Jonathan A. Stapley for this reference.

“IT IS PRICELESS”

C. C. A. Christensen's *Untitled*
[Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]

C. C. A. Christensen.

Painter

Ephraim

Saints



BY LAURA ALLRED HURTADO

Former Global Acquisitions Art Curator,
Church History Museum

Referring to the recently discovered 22-foot painted panorama by C. C. A. Christensen, Steven L. Olsen, former managing director of the Church History Department, said, “This may be the single most important ‘discovery’ of Latter-day Saint art in my thirty-year career.”¹ Later, Olsen made an even bolder claim: “The soon-to-be-acquired scroll painted by pioneer artist C.C.A. Christensen is one of the most important works of art collected by the Church History Department in this generation.”² Utah art gallerist David Ericson believes the panorama is “the most important nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint doctrinal visual document that I have seen or that has been discovered in the last thirty years. It is priceless.”³ Robert Davis, past curator for the Church History Museum, judges the scroll to be of “the greatest significance, rarity, and usefulness.”⁴

JUST WHAT IS THIS “PRICELESS” FIND OF “THIS GENERATION”?

It is a dramatic eleven-panel panorama or scroll painted by C. C. A. Christensen in the early 1870s after receiving a commission from Dimick Huntington, a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁵ This newly rediscovered scroll was apparently untitled by the artist, but it is now officially known as *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*. Huntington and fellow missionary George Washington Hill had been called to share their faith with members of the Gosiute, Ute, Paiute, and Shoshone (Western and Shoshone-Bannock) nations. The scroll was jointly used by the two missionaries to teach Native Americans the biblical

history of the world and events of the Restoration, starting with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and ending with Joseph Smith receiving the gold plates from the angel Moroni.



DIMICK HUNTINGTON

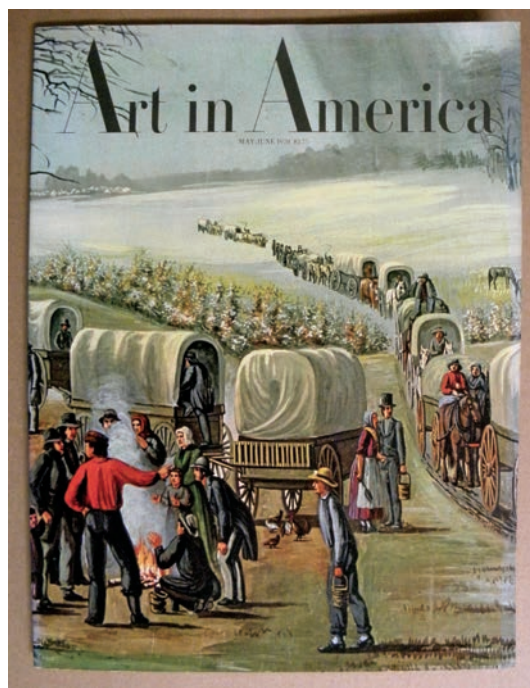
The scroll's creator, C. C. A. Christensen, was a Danish convert who served missions in Denmark and Norway before immigrating to Utah with his wife, Elise Rosalie Sternhjem Scheel, in the 7th Handcart Company in 1857, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in September of that year and ultimately settling in Sanpete County. Before his immigration and missions, Christensen studied art at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts at Charlottenborg Palace, first while apprenticing as a carpenter in the evenings, and then under painter Carl Rosent, who was best known as a decorative artist. At the Academy, Rosent was essentially an adjunct faculty member and taught easel, decorative, and house painting. Christensen, within the apprentice process, rose to the level of perspective drawing but then stagnated, never rising to live-model drawing. His arrested artistic development may have been caused by his religious conversion, or, given the narrow expertise of his mentor, it may have been the logical end of his apprenticeship.⁶ For whatever reason, his training was limited even though Christensen studied at one of the most significant art schools in Denmark during the “global age of Danish painting.” Indeed, his works have a particular flatness to them, created in a folkish and naïve style. His figures lack modeling and a rich understanding of anatomy, but his colors are warm and his subject matter significant.

Had Christensen stayed in Denmark and not converted to the Church of Jesus Christ, his artistic

output likely would have been forgotten. But as an American artist and a Latter-day Saint on the western frontier, his works function as historic documents, particularly his studies of early Utah pioneers. His best-known and most celebrated work, *Mormon Panorama* (1878), is a 175-foot-long scroll with twenty-three paintings, indexing the history of the foundation of the Church. It is considered by biographers Richard Jensen and Richard Oman to be the “most complete visual history of the early formative period of Mormon history ever painted.”⁷ This panorama was used for decades as a tool to preserve the first-person accounts of early Church history for younger generations.

The Christensen family’s donation of the *Mormon Panorama* to Brigham Young University in the 1950s greatly raised its profile, and by the 1970s not only was it well recognized within the Church community and praised by Elder Boyd K. Packer in his famed “Art and the Spirit of the Lord” speech, but it was also receiving prominent national exposure. One of its twenty-two individual panels appeared on the cover of the elite *Art in America*; its separated panels were exhibited in the prestigious Whitney Museum of American Art; and *Mormon Panorama* was dubbed the “art discovery of 1970.”⁸ Such exposure and critical appreciation was significant because it marked a rare moment when Latter-day Saint subject matter appeared on a national platform for objective reasons. Said scholar Jane Dillenger, “It is certain that the discovery of the Christensen paintings meant for the outside world the discovery of Mormon art.”⁹

It is noteworthy, then, that the Church History Museum’s recently acquired Christensen work—*Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*—was created sometime between 1871 and 1875, and thus predates the famed *Mormon Panorama* by at least three years.¹⁰ Various informal names for this untitled panorama exist, including “doctrinal panorama,”¹¹ “C. C. A. Christensen eleven-panel



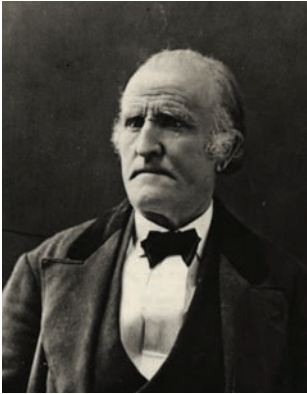
ART IN AMERICA, MAY–JUNE 1970

panorama,”¹² “Gospel through the Ages Panorama,”¹³ and the “Huntington scroll.” Jensen and Oman, in their 1984 book *C. C. A. Christensen* refer to it simply as the “Huntington panorama.”

The panorama is cited in at least one primary source contemporaneous with Christensen, the journal of Latter-day Saint Bishop Frederick Kesler, who wrote, on March 19, 1875, the following:

Prst Young & his Councilers met in council with the Lamanites in our ward School House[.] 50 or 60 indians waere present a few of our Breathern present [.] a Small panorama got up by D. B. Huntington was exhibited commencing with adam & eve in the garden of Eaden with several interesting circumstances or insidences which transpired from then until the time that the angle moroni delivered the plates unto Joseph Smith. Each picture was Explained unto them. They ware very timely & good Council.¹⁴

The current article follows Kesler’s lead in not assigning a name to the scroll, referencing it simply as *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*, given that Kesler describes the scroll in terms of its commissioner—the missionary who used it—and



GEORGE WASHINGTON HILL

the American Indian nations for whom it was created.¹⁵

But how exactly does a scroll like this go “undiscovered” for so long? Kept and passed down by the Hill family (after it was transferred to Huntington’s former missionary companion, George Washington Hill, following the death of

Huntington), the scroll was stored in a variety of locations, including under a waterbed. Apparently it was also used, on occasion, as a racing surface for Matchbox cars. It was ultimately inherited by Virginia Hill Beus Hipwell, a granddaughter of George Washington Hill. Hipwell’s daughter-in-law happened to mention to Church Historian and Recorder Elder Marlin K. Jensen—during the planning of their sixty-year high school reunion—that the family owned a scroll signed by artist C. C. A. Christensen. Offers of valuables “found in Grandma’s attic” are common to most collecting institutions, museums, and libraries. But rare and significant indeed is a nineteenth-century work of art by a well-known artist—a work with such unique subject matter, historic meaning, and clear provenance; a work preserved by the family who inherited it but lost to scholars.

Significant praise is owed to the Hill descendants, who not only were responsible caretakers of the panorama, but maintained the scroll intact and (despite light “racetrack usage”) in good condition for decades.

Painted panoramas were an extremely popular element of mass culture from the late eighteenth century through the late nineteenth, and were used for entertainment, education, travel lectures, and propaganda. They are thought of today as a precursor to motion pictures in that they employed moving painted scenes in the delivery of performative narration. Like films today, panoramas created an illusion of “being there,” capturing particular historical moments through visual images and accompanying oral narrative. Some panoramas were very large, nearly



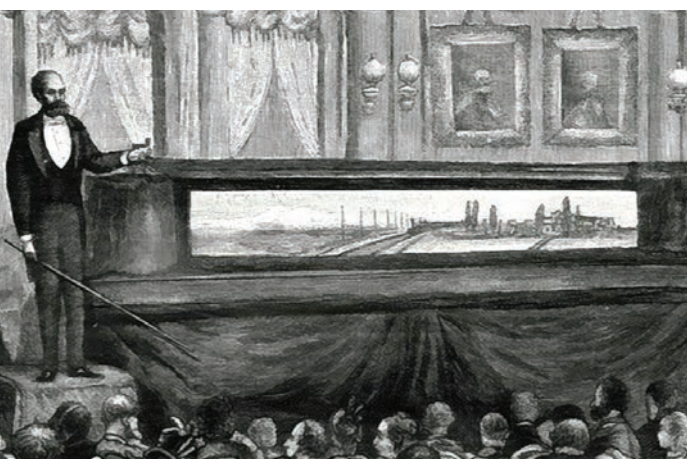


the size of theater sets.¹⁶ The showing of such panorama paintings was usually set to a narrative script and paired with performances, lighting, sound, and a whole host of other theatrical elements. For the viewer, it was a carefully designed, fully immersive experience for its time.

While panoramas came in a variety of forms (dioramas, circle panoramas, and cycloramas, to name a few), Christensen, like many other artists in the United States, used the *moving panorama* form. This form employed a long, canvas-backed scroll and was based loosely on Chinese traditions. Either end of the scroll was attached to a large vertical roller. A frame or stand held the scroll so that its separate pictures could be displayed one at a time as assistants turned the rollers to change the image. Through panoramas, each nineteenth-century viewer was “casually changed from a passerby to an eyewitness of highly significant events.”¹⁷

Because of the tremendous size and ephemeral nature of many panoramas, because of wear-and-tear deriving from their repeated handling and being transported long distances, and because of the advent of motion pictures, very few panoramas have survived into the twenty-first century. Of those that have survived, many have been cut into separate pictures or sections—with portions lost—or have excessive conservation issues that render them undisplayable.

The *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]* is unique in its relatively small scale compared to other panoramas of its era, measuring only twenty-two feet long and eighteen inches wide. The size alone suggests that, even in its heyday, it didn’t have the same visual bravado or immersive theatricality of larger-scale panoramas. The historical context suggests that, in size and use, the scroll was more a missionary flipchart than an entertainment spectacle: it illustrated significant spiritual principles or doctrines through relatively small depictions of religiously significant moments in time. It was designed for use with small, intimate gatherings; of such audiences, Kesler wrote that “each picture was Explained unto them.”¹⁸ While perhaps lacking in drama, the scroll’s compact size made it more easily preservable and more readily transportable, so that it could be shared with audiences in the remotest parts of the Utah



Territory. Indeed, it is the only extant *complete* panorama by a nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint artist.

In closely examining the subjects of the scroll, gallerist David Ericson felt that “doctrinally, this panorama has many visual references to the Temple Endowment,” and he suggested relevant themes corresponding to each of the eleven subjects of the scroll.

But such a reading assumes viewer understanding of the temple ordinance. Put differently, it assumes a particular audience of knowing *members*. While it is true that the scroll was likely created after Shoshone Chief Sagwitch and his wife Beawoachee had been endowed and sealed in the Endowment House in early 1875, its primary function was as a proselytizing tool that enabled potential *converts* to learn fundamental gospel doctrines and teachings.¹⁹

Collectively, the scroll taught a kind of overview of Judeo-Christian history. Individually, however, its carefully selected pictorial subjects taught focused spiritual (and political) messages to the members of the Shoshone and other American Indian nations who viewed it and heard the accompanying narrative: violence is fraught with problems; peace is dependent upon unity; obedience brings blessings; ordinances and accompanying covenants are vital to happiness and growth; America is a Promised Land whose inhabitants are obliged to worship the true God; Jesus Christ and his atonement should be at the center of the individual human life; and—

perhaps most intriguingly—European American settlers and Native American peoples have familial connections. Certainly, Latter-day Saint outreaches did not constitute the first exposure of the Shoshone or other indigenous peoples to proselytizing or to biblical history. Yet, the missionaries’ perspective of American Indians—as first taught by Joseph Smith—was surely unique: that they “are a part of God’s chosen people, and are destined, by heaven, to inherit this land in common with them.”²⁰

Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints often used the terms *Indian* and *Lamanite* interchangeably to capture the sentiments and perspectives contemporary to the period. Nevertheless, *Lamanite* specifically refers to a civilization and people central to the Book of Mormon, a people believed to be “among the ancestors of the American Indians.”²¹ Historian Ronald W. Walker said that the Book of Mormon was not just “a record of the Lamanites or Native American people, but a highly unusual manifesto of their destiny.”²² Historian David Grua emphasizes the importance of millennialist belief to nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints, noting that their conception of the end of the world was often paired with the arrival of the “Day of the Lamanite.”²³ Within this context, the panorama functioned as a tool of conversion as well as a type of propaganda; in both roles, the panorama uniquely targeted a specific population and highlighted specific Latter-day Saint concerns—such as the importance of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and physical/spiritual security.

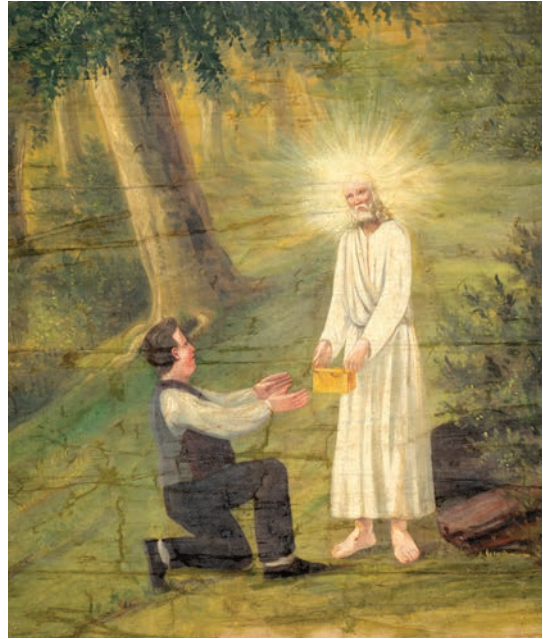
Several of the panels support these themes. For example, panel two depicts the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Abel’s wounded body lies gruesomely in the foreground, while Cain, whose face is unseen by the viewer, retreats. The story of Cain and Abel holds a particularly relevant warning for nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints and their Native American neighbors: fraternal relationships are fatally severed through conflict and violence.²⁴

Drawing on a Book of Mormon story about the righteous Nephi being tied to a ship's mast by his rebellious brothers, panel five also depicts sibling violence. The peaceful and boyish-looking Nephi, bathed in a gentle light, is portrayed in stark contrast to the shadowed figures—and the surrounding storm—that oppose him. In embryo, this scene depicts the family division at the heart of what would become a gulf between the two great nations of the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and the Lamanites. Accordingly, the panel suggests the nineteenth-century necessity of healing and reconciliation, of the bringing together in one society and faith America's indigenous peoples and European American pioneers.

Baptism and, by extension, obedience to God's commandments, are also recurring themes. The image of baptism is first suggested by panel three (*Noah and the Ark*) and then underscored in panel seven (*Baptism of Jesus*). The story of the Flood is a cautionary one. Only those who obey God's commandments and follow his prophet survive the earth's tumultuous baptism. Viewers of the panel are thus urged to get on board. With the threat of annihilation looming for American Indian nations, this message would have been tangibly—and perhaps offensively—clear.

Jesus's exemplary baptism, as depicted in panel seven, diffuses the potential ethnocentrism of panel three by its forwarding the example of Christ and its underscoring the importance of loving and obeying God. Regardless of one's position, ethnicity, nationality, or perspectives, one best discovers joy through loving and serving God. Through Christ, even the terrible violence of the crucifixion is made holy, enabling mortal redemption and salvation.

Panel six (*Lehi's Family Arriving in the Promised Land*) introduces the American continent as the "promised land" described in the Book of Mormon. Panel nine (*Christ and His Disciples in the New World*) creates America as a Holy Land where, as in Palestine, Christ taught, performed miracles, and established his Church.



Panels ten and eleven connect religious histories of the past to the nineteenth-century present. Panel ten shows Moroni, a Book of Mormon prophet, hiding the plates that recorded the spiritual history of his people, the Nephite and Lamanite civilizations. In panel eleven, Joseph Smith is shown receiving those same plates from the same Moroni, now a resurrected heavenly messenger. Thus, the panorama emphasizes that it is through the restored Church of Jesus Christ that American Indians—as descendants of Book of Mormon peoples and as inheritors of priceless birthrights—can understand and reach their great potential.

As documented in letters and journals of the time period, Huntington, Hill, and other Latter-day Saint missionaries were successful in teaching and baptizing many Shoshone, Bannock, Ute, and other American Indians. Although relationships between European American Latter-day Saints and their Native American converts are not without sometimes serious flaws, the first American Indian converts played crucial roles in early Latter-day Saint history throughout the West, and their lives and faith continue to inform the culture and makeup of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today.

Outside Bishop Kelser's journal, it is difficult to know the precise impact of Christensen's scroll on

early Latter-day Saint missionary work among indigenous peoples, and the impetus of conversion among early American Indian Saints—while heart-felt—remains layered. That Christensen continued making panoramas, however, supports his apparent belief that the medium had unique powers to tell compelling stories and to capture the essence of what it meant to be a Latter-day Saint. ▣

1 Steven L. Olsen, "C. C. A. Christensen Panorama," email to McClain Bybee, 2 Dec 2010.

2 Steven L. Olsen, "C. C. A. Christensen Scroll: Proposal for a Strategy of Professional Care," unpublished text, 20 Apr 2017, *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]* object file, Church History Museum.

3 David Ericson, "C. C. A. Christensen Doctrinal Panorama Appraisal," 22 Jun 2010, 1.

4 Robert O. Davis, "Background Data from C. C. A. Christensen's Newly-Discovered Eleven-Panel Panorama: Providing Context to Evaluate the Recently Found Collection of 11 Paintings," unpublished text, 7 Sep 2010, *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]* object file, Church History Museum.

5 Several secondary sources mention Dan Weggeland as one of the painters of the *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Scroll]*, either as creator or collaborator with C. C. A. Christensen. The advertisement for a 2003 exhibition of both the *Mormon Panorama* and the "Huntington scroll" at the BYU Museum of Art connects Weggeland to this scroll without attribution. The artists knew each other and had collaborated on projects early in their careers. However, the primary evidence points only to Christensen. The scroll itself is signed on the back by C. C. A. Christensen, and Dimick Huntington's journal does not mention Weggeland. The author of this article makes no other claim for or against Weggeland's possible role.

6 Richard L. Jensen and Richard G. Oman, *C. C. A. Christensen, 1831–1912: Mormon Immigrant Artist* (1984), 5. Jensen and Oman say that Christensen's conversion indirectly caused his "arrested development" as an artist, given that his baptism and subsequent missionary service troubled the patrons that supported his study, perhaps leading to a withdrawal of funds. Christensen himself wrote that his "dreams of becoming an artist suddenly seemed to be destroyed or overthrown for good since we anticipated that the end of the world would come within a few years" ("C. C. A. Christensen's Levnedsløb," 337). There are undoubtedly other causes of Christensen's stalled training, including the tutelage of his craft-based mentor, the biases of his patrons, and an underdeveloped natural skill.

7 Ibid 91.

8 Ibid.

9 Jane Dillenberger, "Mormonism and American Religious Art," *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaean-Christian Parallels*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (1978). A pioneer art historian, Dillenberger was among the first to explore relationships between modern art and religion, authoring such books as *The Religious Art of Pablo Picasso* and *The Religious Art of Andy Warhol*.

10 Dating based on the date on the obverse of the panorama, contemporary photographs, and primary source references.

11 Ericson 1.

12 Davis 1.

13 "Acquisition Case Statement: C. C. A. Christensen's 'Gospel Through the Ages' Panorama," unpublished text, Church History Department, 1 Mar 2011; *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*, object file, Church History Museum.

14 Diary of Frederick Kesler, 1859–1874, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, as cited in Jonathan Stapley, "From the Archives: Native Americans and Frederick Kesler," *Juvenile Instructor* website, 4 Dec 2013, online.

15 Lamanite is in no means a neutral term now, but within nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint contexts, was coded positive. For more about Church usage of the term Lamanite, see Michael R. Ash, "Challenging Issues, Keeping the Faith: The Double Meaning of the Term 'Lamanite,'" *Deseret News*, 3 May 2010.

16 Christensen was not the only panorama painter in Utah. According to Jensen and Oman, Ruben Kirkham, Alfred Lamborne, and William Armitage also painted panoramas; see John F. McDermott, *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi* (1958) and Dolf Sternberger, *Panorama of the Nineteenth Century* (1977).

17 Sternberger 1.

18 "From the Archives: Native Americans and Frederick Kesler," op. cit.

19 Steven L. Olsen attaches a uniquely "Book of Mormon reading" to the panorama, particularly as referenced in Moroni 10:3, which invites faith-seekers to "remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things and ponder it in you hearts."

20 *Latter day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (Aug 1836), 354.

21 The phrase comes from the introduction to the Book of Mormon, which summarizes the text as providing "an account of two great civilizations . . . known as the Nephites and the Lamanites." Admittedly, both *Indians* and *Lamanites* are, for many today, loaded and vexed terms.

22 Ronald W. Walker "Seeking the Remnant: The Native American in the Joseph Smith Period," *Journal of Mormon History* 19.1 (1993): 5.

23 David Grua, "Painting the Mythical and the Heroic: Joseph Preaches to the American Indians," *Juvenile Instructor* website, 19 Nov 2013, online.

24 "Race and the Priesthood," *Topics*, *Church of Jesus Christ.org*, online

UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

As articles in this issue of *Pioneer* note, Salt Lake City bishop Frederick Kesler wrote in his diary that, beginning on March 15, 1875, Dimick Huntington spent two weeks in meetings with groups of Native Americans. In his presentations, Huntington showed scenes from Christensen's panorama while explaining vital principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Kesler reported that the Indians "were very much interest[ed]" in Huntington's testimony.

The first scene in the panorama depicts *Adam and Eve in the Garden*. Intriguingly, Christensen's Garden of Eden is not a traditional paradise of flowers, groomed shrubbery, and a gentle stream, but a peaceful woodland. Christensen thus imagines the garden more as a condition of peace and security than as an actual place. Animals in the background are indiscriminately light and dark, underscoring their paradisiacal equality as friendly, non-threatening, and meaningful creations of a loving God.

But the continuance of this world hangs in the balance, dependent on the decision Adam and Eve are poised to make. Adam reaches for the fruit Eve holds. The light woven through the center of the scene is surrounded by subtle shadow. The bear hovers near smaller and potentially vulnerable creatures. Innocence is threatened by shame and guilt. The serpent itself seems poised to strike.









UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

CAIN AND ABEL

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

While *Adam and Eve in the Garden* depicts a choice enabling the mortal understanding of right and wrong, the preservation of agency, and the intercession of Christ, *Cain and Abel* shows a darkly contrasting world: the confusion of right and wrong, the abuse of agency, and the rejection of Christ. Cain reveals his guilt and fear by running from his crime, looking back over his shoulder at the altar and rejected offering—the seemingly inconsequential facts motivating his jealous choice to “rise up against Abel his brother” (Gen. 4:8).

The diagonal formed by the right side of the tree at the center of the painting separates an open, enlightened space from a dark, constricted one. Abel lies in the foreground bathed in a pool of light, his body position suggesting sleep, not death. His accepted offering, a sacrificial lamb, burns while blood flowing from Abel’s wound merges with the altar-purification water puddled at the altar’s base. Abel is thus depicted through Christ-centered imagery of redemption and life. In contrast, Cain’s hurried retreat into a closed, shadowed world suggests the spiritual costs of turning from God.

Kesler recorded in his diary on March 18, 1875, that “the indians manifest a desire to go to farming & of living more as we do[.]” In this context, Christensen’s painting may have had a more immediate application to both Native Americans and whites listening to Huntington’s lecture, serving as a visceral warning against violence and warfare, especially between “brothers.”

UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

NOAH AND THE ARK

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Kesler reports that, on March 19, 1875, while teaching Indians from the panorama scenes, President Brigham Young “gave them some very timely and good Council”—apparently focusing, in part, on obedience and the keeping of covenant promises.

In his depiction of *Noah and the Ark*, Christensen indirectly portrays Noah’s family being saved from the Flood. Christensen’s focus is on death: the vulnerable bodies of unbelievers floating in the water and, somewhat ironically, a predatory bird devouring a dead cat.

The post-Flood water is glassy and calm. The ark floats majestically at the painting’s center. Although thunderheads still fill the sky, God has promised Noah that humankind will never again be destroyed by water. The rainbow signifying God’s covenant seems literally to bind the ark to heaven, sanctifying and protecting its occupants as they honor and obey God.





UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

LEHI'S FAMILY LEAVING JERUSALEM

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Some viewers of the scroll have suggested that a cropped version of this panel would be superior to its full form, a version removing the bottom third of the panel (and the ballooned legs and stylized moccasins of family members). But such cropping would also remove the dog, a homely symbol of the family's permanent departure, and the abrupt terrain shift from vegetation to dust.

Christensen depicts the family immediately outside the walls of Jerusalem, the city's walls looming up behind them as an enormous barrier marking their status as outsiders. Although barely beyond the city gates, they seem already to be in a wilderness. Their vulnerability is emphasized by their lack of traveling clothing, by their scanty possessions, by their being few in number. (Interestingly, Lehi's daughters are not depicted in the painting.)

Nephi—presumably the foreground figure on the right—carries his bow and a quiver of arrows is on his back. He carries a sword through his sash—perhaps suggesting his subsequent acquisition of the sword of Laban. Though obviously youthful, he gazes ahead unwaveringly. The implication is that the family will survive by faith, dependent on God for water, food, shelter, and all other necessary things.









UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

NEPHI TIED TO THE MAST

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

During their sea voyage to the New World, Laman, Lemuel, and others rebelled against Lehi's authority and Nephi's counsel, eventually tying Nephi to the mast of their ship. A few days later, as a fierce storm threatened to destroy the ship, Nephi's brothers humbled themselves and untied him, and Nephi again helped guide the ship toward the Promised Land.

A striking contrast to the imposing ship later depicted by artists like Arnold Friberg, Christensen's vessel seems barely larger than a rowboat. The ghostly faces peering from the doorway of the boat's cabin—presumably those of Lehi and Sariah—are indeed representative of parents "about to be brought down to lie low" (1 Ne. 18:18) because of grief over their warring sons.

Christensen depicts a kind of local tempest, one surrounding the family's boat but not, apparently, encompassing the larger ocean. Perhaps, Christensen seems to be suggesting, Laman and Lemuel falsely believed that, through their own power, they could simply sail out of danger into calmer waters. Nephi, meanwhile, is bound to a cross-like structure in a clear reference to Christ. Resolute and unswayed, yet uncomplaining and forgiving, Nephi proves through this experience his worthiness to eventually succeed his father as God's chosen leader over the family.

UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

LEHI'S FAMILY ARRIVING IN THE PROMISED LAND¹

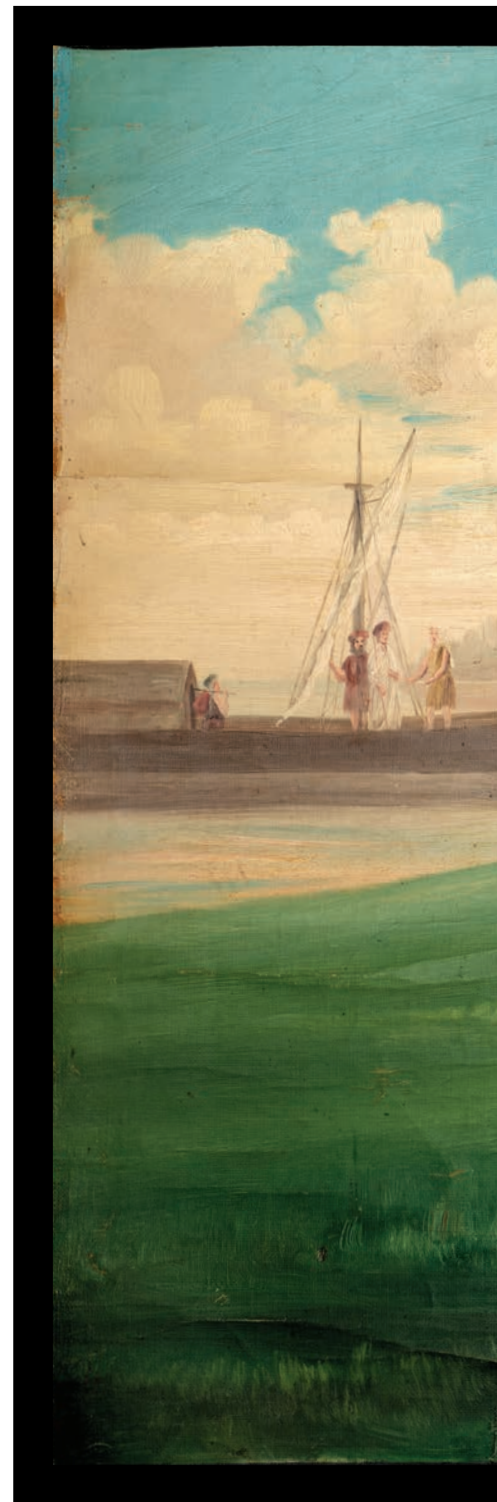
CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

In *Lehi's Family Arriving in the Promised Land*, Christensen depicts Lehi's family immediately following their arrival in the Promised Land. Some family members are still on the boat; others are wading to shore. And a small number stand on the place that will become their new home, making devotions to God their first act. The resemblance of the landscape here bears striking resemblance to that of *Adam and Eve in the Garden*, underscoring its pristine, sacred nature.

Nephi—identically clothed in all three panels depicting members of Lehi's family—kneels in the foreground, his hands raised in prayer. Behind him, presumably, are his parents—Lehi and Sariah—and his younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph. That these five are the first to set foot on the land God has promised them demonstrates their unwavering faith in and devotion to God—and their desire to immediately begin the work God has assigned them. It is interesting that among these few figures are the first three Nephite prophets: Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob. From the moment of their arrival, Christensen suggests, family members are choosing spiritual sides.

In Christensen's scroll, Nephi becomes a type of Joseph Smith—a youthful prophet who speaks with God in behalf of his family and who carries spiritual burdens far beyond his years. Significantly, he is the only figure in the painting directly facing the light.

¹ The CHM-assigned research title is "Nephi Blessing the Promised Land"





UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

BAPTISM OF JESUS WITH HOLY GHOST IN FORM OF DOVE

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Christensen's *Baptism of Jesus* depicts the Savior emerging from the River Jordan. John the Baptist has just performed Christ's baptism, but it is the bright diagonal of light that seems to raise Jesus, drawing him heavenward as God the Father declares, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). The sign of the dove in the column of light evidences "the Spirit of God descending ... and lighting upon" Christ (Matt. 3:16).

This painting is significant for its ethereal quality. Beyond the central light from heaven, boundaries or distinctions between earth and water are blurred, perhaps helping emphasize baptism as a metaphorical burial. More importantly, the painting suggests that nature itself is transformed by its Creator's infinite love and conformance to spiritual law.

Certainly *Baptism of Jesus* would have held significance for Native Americans who embraced the restored gospel and accepted baptism. In journal entries for March 1875, Kesler mentions an early Indian baptismal service. From March 20 to 25, Kesler secured materials and pipes to construct the "Indian house & font," filling the font "without difficulty." Kesler rejoices in this "first Font buil[t] & Dedicated by the Holy priesthood for the Baptising of the remnants of Jacob in this last dispensation."









UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

In *Crucifixion of Christ* Christensen portrays Christ on the cross with a crown of thorns upon his head. The sign affixed to the cross bears the letters *INRI* which stand for the Latin “*Iesvs Nazarens Rex Iudaeorum*,” meaning “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

Given that both panels feature a column of heavenly light, *Crucifixion* echoes *Baptism of Jesus*. In *Crucifixion* the column is comprised of separate rays, its angle matching the angle of Christ’s head. The light suggests motion, a pulling of the Savior toward it, perhaps suggesting the moment of the Savior’s death.

The dying Christ is depicted as a solitary, forsaken figure walled out from the city he longed to save. The colors of the painting are understandably muted, with subtle purples—a traditional Easter color—suggesting sorrow, suffering, and humility while simultaneously emphasizing Christ’s royalty. Jesus’ mortal mission was ending, Jesus will rise the third day as King of Kings.

UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES IN THE NEW WORLD

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
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In *Christ and His Disciples in the New World*, Christensen depicts Christ raising his right hand heavenward as he commissions twelve disciples to baptize and bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 12).

In their clothing, posture, and attitudes, the disciples are more individualized than most other characters in the *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*. Interestingly, the men represent a variety of ages; their positions relative to one another suggest distinctions in backgrounds and interests. Because he understands how these men will later mature as wise and dedicated apostles of Jesus Christ, Christensen may be underscoring Christ's power to unify and enable those who accept his call to serve him with their hearts, minds, and strength.

The bucolic setting implicitly contrasts with the world the disciples are commissioned to call to repentance. Background structures, including a pyramid, represent nineteenth-century notions of ancient cultures, and ruined buildings point to the destruction occurring before Christ's appearance in the Americas.





UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

MORONI HIDING THE PLATES²

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

In *Moroni Hiding the Plates*, Christensen seems to be depicting Moroni (wearing European-looking armor) and his father, Mormon, hiding the gold plates and the sword of Laban. A battle rages in the background, and both men know their people will soon be destroyed.

The painting's central figure, Moroni, wears bright clothing that attracts our attention to the prophet who will be the final keeper of the plates and, eventually, the "lone survivor" of his people.

But there is hope in Christ's promise to preserve a remnant of Lehi's family, and it is for this remnant, in large part, that the Nephite record is written and preserved. In a later time, Lehi's descendants will accept Christ and the testimony of him written by their fathers (see 3 Ne. 20, Moroni 10). This is the bright promise to which Mormon and Moroni cling—a promise that, in the eyes of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints, was realized before their eyes in the conversion and baptisms of Native Americans who accepted the restored gospel.

² The CHM-assigned research title is "Moroni Burying the Plates"





UNTITLED
[HUNTINGTON/LAMANITE PANORAMA]
CIRCA 1871–1875

MORONI GIVING THE PLATES TO JOSEPH SMITH

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
11-PANEL OIL ON LINEN PANORAMA
26 INCHES WIDE BY 264 INCHES LONG
COLLECTION OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

In *Moroni Giving the Plates to Joseph Smith*, Christensen portrays Joseph Smith Jr. receiving the gold plates from the resurrected Moroni. During periods of instruction from Moroni himself, Joseph was told that he must prepare himself to translate the plates through the power of God—and that he must then deliver the translated record to the world. Most especially, however, he was to ensure that the translated record be taken to the “Lamanites,” the native peoples of the Americas.

Christensen depicts Joseph kneeling on a steep hillside, reaching to accept the invaluable record from the angel Moroni. The former hiding place of the record lies exposed behind Moroni. The scene is peaceful and reverent. It feels profoundly quiet.

Crucially, the scene itself reinforces the identity of the makers of the Book of Mormon record, binding them to those of Lehi’s descendants who would embrace the restored gospel and find personal relevance in the Book of Mormon message. This represented, in the eyes of Dimick Huntington and other early missionaries, the central purpose of Christensen’s *Untitled* scroll.

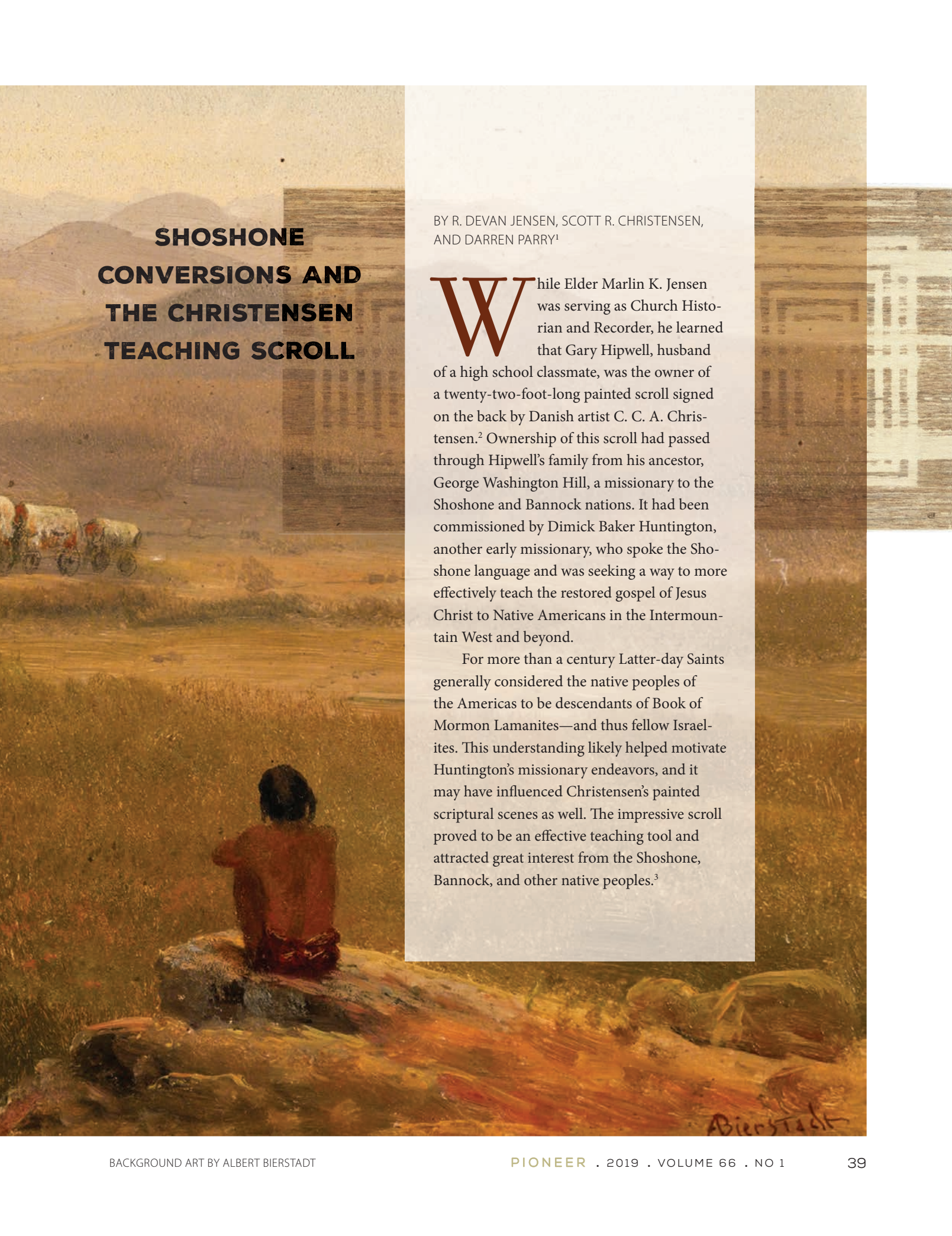
“C. C. A. Christensen Doctrinal Panorama Appraisal,” 22 Jun 2010, 3; adapted.





“Like Fire in the Dry Grass”





SHOSHONE CONVERSIONS AND THE CHRISTENSEN TEACHING SCROLL

BY R. DEVAN JENSEN, SCOTT R. CHRISTENSEN,
AND DARREN PARRY¹

While Elder Marlin K. Jensen was serving as Church Historian and Recorder, he learned that Gary Hipwell, husband of a high school classmate, was the owner of a twenty-two-foot-long painted scroll signed on the back by Danish artist C. C. A. Christensen.² Ownership of this scroll had passed through Hipwell's family from his ancestor, George Washington Hill, a missionary to the Shoshone and Bannock nations. It had been commissioned by Dimick Baker Huntington, another early missionary, who spoke the Shoshone language and was seeking a way to more effectively teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to Native Americans in the Intermountain West and beyond.

For more than a century Latter-day Saints generally considered the native peoples of the Americas to be descendants of Book of Mormon Lamanites—and thus fellow Israelites. This understanding likely helped motivate Huntington's missionary endeavors, and it may have influenced Christensen's painted scriptural scenes as well. The impressive scroll proved to be an effective teaching tool and attracted great interest from the Shoshone, Bannock, and other native peoples.³

Survival of the Shoshone in the Balance

For several years after Latter-day Saints began settling in the Rocky Mountains, the Shoshone retained full access to Cache Valley, the epicenter of their world as hunter-gatherers. Initially, the valley was considered too cold for permanent white settlement. That changed in September 1856 when, under the direction of Brigham Young, Elder E. T. Benson instructed the members of the failed Tooele County settlement of E. T. City⁴ to colonize what soon became known as Wellsville.

Within a short time, Latter-day Saint colonization of Cache Valley began to negatively impact resident Shoshones. Native grasses were grazed down before they could produce seeds, an important Shoshone food source. Game was overhunted and streams were fished-out. Although Latter-day Saint leaders and members tried to follow President Young's policy of feeding the Indians rather than fighting them,⁵ tensions between the settlers and the native people remained high. After white provocations in 1859, Shoshone men launched a campaign against Cache Valley communities, including theft of horses and cattle and direct confrontations with whites.⁶

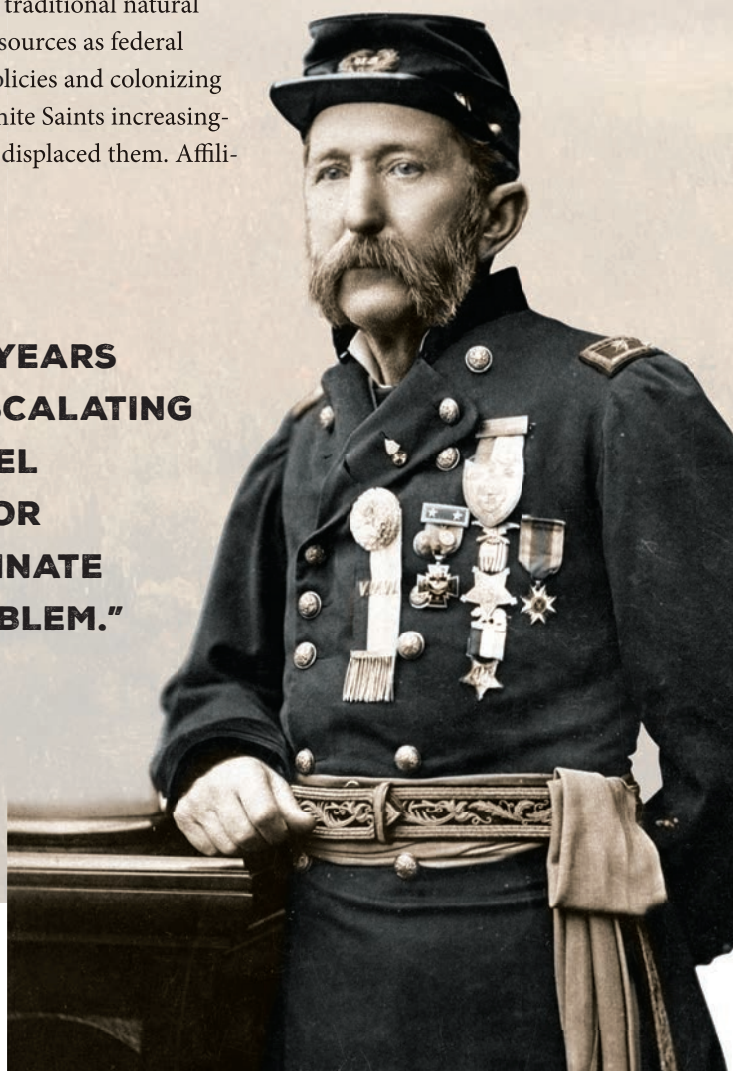
After several years of raids and escalating conflict, Colonel Patrick E. Connor decided to eliminate the "Indian problem." On January 29, 1863, he led federal troops in a surprise attack on the sleeping Shoshone village at Beaver Creek near its confluence with the Bear River, north of present-day Preston, Idaho. A lopsided battle soon became a wholesale massacre as the Shoshone men tried to mount a defense without adequate weaponry or protection. About four hundred Shoshone men, women, and children were murdered; some Shoshone women were raped as they lay dying from their wounds. Latter-day Saint settlers in Franklin cared for the wounded and frostbitten soldiers and for several wounded Shoshone women and children.⁷

Chief Sagwitch, who had long been on friendly terms with the Church and its members, was injured in the attack but survived. For a few months he approved raids on Latter-day Saint cattle herds as retaliation for the involvement of frontiersman Orrin Porter Rockwell as Connor's guide to the Shoshone camp and for the aid local Latter-day Saints gave federal troops after the massacre. Sagwitch then resumed a pattern of negotiating peaceful coexistence. He also supported the signing of the Treaty of Box Elder on July 30, 1863, which required the Shoshone to adopt a policy of peaceful coexistence in return for land retention and \$5,000 of federal assistance each year.

With this treaty in place, the Shoshone resumed hunting and gathering activities to the degree still possible with so many prime areas now claimed and fenced by white settlers. By 1871 several Shoshone bands had been relocated to Fort Hall, the Wind River Reservation, or other locations.⁸

It was increasingly difficult by the early 1870s for non-reservation Shoshone bands to maintain access to traditional natural resources as federal policies and colonizing white Saints increasingly displaced them. Affili-

**AFTER SEVERAL YEARS
OF RAIDS AND ESCALATING
CONFLICT, COLONEL
PATRICK E. CONNOR
DECIDED TO ELIMINATE
THE "INDIAN PROBLEM."**





THE BATTLE OF BEAR RIVER BY EDMOND J. FITZGERALD, LOCATED IN THE PRESTON, IDAHO, POST OFFICE.

ating with the Church of Jesus Christ as a strategy made sense for many, including the various northern Shoshone bands living in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho, since conversion gave them social standing and hope for a better future. Many members of the Northwestern Shoshone bands led by Sagwitch and Sanpitch experienced a conversion process that led not only to baptism but to subsequent devotion to the Church.

Creation of the Panorama

It was likely in October 1871 that Carl Christian Anton Christensen completed his scroll of eleven carefully painted scenes portraying biblical and Book of Mormon stories.⁹ Christensen was a Danish immigrant who had been studying at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts when he joined the Church of Jesus Christ in September 1850.¹⁰ While serving as a missionary in Norway, he met and taught Dan Weggeland, with whom he later collaborated on several artistic projects in Utah Territory. As with other Christensen projects, Weggeland may have assisted with the Book of Mormon scroll, which rolled vertically to display its paintings while the missionaries taught their Indian investigators one scene at a time.

So why did Dimick Huntington¹¹ commission this painted panoramic scroll to teach Native American peoples? Panoramas were a fairly common form of educational entertainment and religious instruction by the mid-1850s. Philo Dibble had traveled throughout

Utah Territory showing scenes of the Restoration, scenes that Christensen then imitated and improved upon when he created his own multi-scene scroll of Church history. It made perfect sense to Huntington to use the panoramic format to more effectively teach and bring to life the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.¹²

“Mysterious Movement” among Native Tribes

In 1872 the Reverend George W. Dodge reported a “mysterious movement” that started when a Nevada Paiute (likely Wodziwob),¹³ declared that he was appointed by the Great Spirit to teach the “origin and destiny” of “all the Indians in America” and how to reclaim the good life they had lost. His statements prompted Indians from various tribes to flock to settlements that had been established under direction of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to seek affiliation with the Church.¹⁴ In addition to experiencing very real spiritual yearnings, many tribespeople saw strategic reasons to align with their colonizers.

In early spring 1873, Sagwitch was told by fellow Shoshone chief Ech-up-wy that three men had appeared to him in a vision and said that he “must go to the ‘Mormons,’ and they would tell him what to do, and that he must do it; that he must be baptized, with all his Indians; that the time was at hand for the Indians to gather, and stop their Indian life, and learn to cultivate

the earth and build houses, and live in them.”¹⁵ Sagwitch gathered his sub-chiefs and traveled to Ogden to meet with George Washington Hill, a man known to them as Ankapompy (“Red Hair”).

Hill was a sympathetic friend to and advocate of the Shoshone. Since his missionary days at Fort Lemhi in the Salmon River Mission two decades earlier, he had traded with the Shoshone and had often served as an interpreter.¹⁶ Chief Sagwitch informed Hill that “the Great Spirit had sent his people dreams and other manifestations, telling them that the Mormon people had the true Church.” He added, “We want you to come to our camp and preach to us and baptize us.”¹⁷ Hill was pleased, but he declined, explaining that he was not currently serving as a missionary and that there was order in the Lord’s kingdom. Sagwitch and the other Shoshone leaders went home, then returned in a few days. Hill declined again. Days later, a letter from Brigham Young called Hill to Salt Lake City, where he was appointed a missionary to gather the Indians to “a central gathering place where they can be taught the art of civilization,

where they can be taught to cultivate the soil and become self-supporting.”¹⁸

“Like Fire in the Dry Grass”

Sagwitch and other chiefs again approached Hill on May 1. Four days later, Hill took the train to the town of Corrine, then walked twelve miles to the Shoshone camp on the Bear River. The Shoshone were expecting him, and he taught, baptized, and confirmed 102 Shoshone that first day, reporting in a letter to Brigham Young, “[I] never felt better in my life nor never spent a happier day.”¹⁹ In a letter to Huntington, a fellow missionary and interpreter, Hill wrote, “To-day I am calld on to baptize another band of about twenty and still they come, and the work is extending like fire in the dry grass.”²⁰

Feeling overwhelmed, Hill asked Huntington for counsel from Brigham Young. The next day, Sagwitch and colleagues Warrah, Shonop, and Ejah, along with several others, arrived in Salt Lake City and were greeted by Huntington, who had been set apart a day earlier as “patriarch to the Lamanites.”²¹ Huntington conferred the



**"TO-DAY I AM CALLED
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GRASS."**

—George Washington Hill

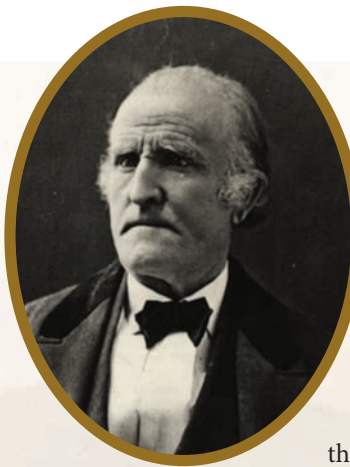
Melchizedek Priesthood and ordained Sagwitch and his companions elders.

In March 1874, to help the Shoshone develop an agrarian lifestyle, Hill looked for available farmland near their ancestral campground, Mosotakani, just outside Franklin, Idaho. He worked with local bishop Lorenzo H. Hatch and the county assessor to lay legal claim to land near Cub Creek and south of Little Mountain. There, Shoshone men helped dig a canal to bring water to the land.²² In a powwow with the colonizers, Chief Sagwitch expressed goodwill toward them and asked to be left alone to manage their own affairs. Sagwitch's band were among the core developers of this farm, and they planted wheat, corn, potatoes, peas, melons, beans, squash, and other vegetables.²³

"Quite a Stir among the Lamanites"

Church leaders felt that the Shoshone were now prepared for more of the gospel message. On February 22, 1875, Wilford Woodruff endowed and sealed two Shoshone couples in the Endowment House, including Sagwitch and his wife (listed as Mogogah but probably Beawoachee).²⁴ Efforts were ongoing to teach and baptize Native Americans, and records show that both Huntington and Hill used the Christensen panorama in various locations to teach individuals and groups.

Salt Lake City bishop Frederick Kesler recorded in his diary on March 15, 1875, that he went "to D. B.



Huntingtons to select a place for the Baptising of the Lamanites which he wants near his Dwelling. There seems to be quite a stir amongst the Lamanites." Three days

later, Kesler met at his ward's schoolhouse with the First Presidency—Brigham Young, Daniel H. Wells, and George Q. Cannon—and a sizeable body of Native Americans. Kesler wrote, "D. B. Huntington was interpreter. The indians manifest a desire to go farming & of living more as we do." The meetings continued on March 19: "Prst Young & his Councilers met in council with the Lamanites in our ward School House; 50 or 60 indians were presant [and] a few of our Breathern ware present. A Small panarama got up by D. B. Huntington was exhibited commencing with adam & eve in the garden of Eaden with several interesting circumstances or insidences which transpired from then until the time that the angle moroni delivered the plates unto Joseph Smith. Each picture was Explained unto them, they ware verry timely & good Council."²⁵

During the April 1875 General Conference of the Church, President Young called several new missionaries to teach the gospel—and farming techniques—to the Indians. That year Chief Pocatello and other Shoshone traveled to Salt Lake City and requested baptism. In a June 1875 response to a query from Elder Joseph F. Smith about the total number of Indian baptisms to that point, Huntington wrote, "There have been 2,000 baptisms already," then adding, "They are coming in by hundreds to investigate, are satisfied and are baptized."²⁶

The July 22 *Deseret Evening News* mentions that Hill was then working with a Shoshone settlement in the Malad Valley and that the men had begun digging a canal to irrigate their crops. Hill reported that the Indians wanted to build homes and farms and "lead



industrious and respectable lives, at peace with all their fellow creatures, refraining from stealing and all manner of bad practices, and abide by the conditions of their baptism.”²⁷

In an August 25 letter to President Young, Hill reported: “I find by looking over my work that I have baptized this season if I have not a miss count eight hundred and eight which [*sic*] with 102 that I baptized two years ago and sixteen I baptized last summer and fifteen baptized by James H. Hill makes a total of nine hundred and thirty nine that belong to this mission.”²⁸

Unfortunately, non-Latter-day-Saint citizens of nearby Corrine circulated rumors that the Shoshone were using the farm as a ruse—and that they were well-armed and preparing for an uprising against them.²⁹ The district attorney fueled such rumors by emphasizing that the Indians were “Mormons”—and that, like their white counterparts then preparing for the Utah War, were plotting against the US Government. When angry Corinne residents demanded that the Shoshone be forcibly returned to Fort Hall, the Fort Hall agent correctly noted that this Shoshone body had never resided at Fort Hall but had always made the Bear River area their home.³⁰ Nevertheless, Chief Sagwitch believed it wise to yield, and, in 1876, he and his band left the farm at Bear River, relocating to undeveloped land near present-day Tremonton. It was Hill who named their new settlement “Lemuel’s Garden.”³¹

Continued Use of the Scroll

After the death of Huntington on February 1, 1879, Hill continued to use the scroll. His daughter-in-law reported: “It was a big scroll, about [18 inches



tall], and he used to have that when he talked to the Indians, and turned to different characters and told them about their forefathers. I do not know what became of that scroll, but I know grandpa had it. It had nice large pictures of the different Nephites and different leaders.”³²

In 1880 Church leaders purchased a 1,700-acre farm near Portage, Utah, along with the unfinished Samaria Canal. The canal was to supply irrigation water from Samaria Lake because the Malad River was too alkaline for watering crops. Many Shoshone moved to this new location, which they named Washakie after the great Shoshone leader who yet lived at Wind River, Wyoming.

Later that year, Amos Wright was called on a mission to the Wind River Reservation where he spent many hours conversing with his friend, Chief Washakie. Early on, Washakie told Wright that “Mormonism” was an invented story, but that the Saints had always been his friends. In broken Shoshone, Wright described the contents of the Book of Mormon and their relationship to American Indians. He emphasized the promises that God

made to the descendants of Lehi. It isn't known whether he used the Christensen scroll, but eighty-seven people requested baptism, including Chief Washakie himself, together with seventeen members of his family. During a four-week period, Wright baptized 422 Shoshone living on or near the reservation.³³

The Shoshone community of Washakie, Utah, also thrived over the years. Its citizens donated many hours of labor to the construction of the Logan Temple.³⁴ Chief Sagwitch, his descendants, and many members of his tribe are buried in the Washakie Cemetery.

Longtime missionary George Washington Hill died on February 24, 1891, and the panoramic scroll passed to his descendants, where its presence remained generally

unknown until its rediscovery in 2007. It was acquired by the Church History Museum in 2017.

Conclusion: A Rich Heritage of Service

Today, descendants of early Shoshone converts continue a rich heritage of service to their tribe and to the Church. For example, Sagwitch's son, Frank W. Warner (born Pisappih "Red Oquirrh" Timbimboo)—who was largely raised by the Amos Warner family after his mother was killed during the Bear River Massacre—became one of the first Native Americans to serve as a full-time missionary for the Church. Sagwitch's grandson Moroni Timbimboo was the first Native American to serve as a bishop in the Church. Great-grandson Darren Parry, coauthor of this article, serves as the chair of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation and has been instrumental in purchasing Bear River Massacre land and planning for construction of the Boa Ogoi Cultural and Interpretive Center that will help preserve his people's heritage.

Darren added, "One day I read a quote attributed to Winston Churchill, and he said, 'History is always written by the victors.' That explains perfectly why my people's perspectives were never written."³⁵

This small article and the future interpretive center are part of a sacred history that must not be forgotten. ▣

**ON FEBRUARY 22, 1875,
WILFORD WOODRUFF ENDOWED
AND SEALED TWO SHOSHONE
COUPLES IN THE ENDOWMENT
HOUSE, INCLUDING SAGWITCH
AND HIS WIFE.**



1 R. Devan Jensen is the executive editor at the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University. Scott R. Christensen is a historian/archivist at the LDS Church History Department in Salt Lake City. Darren Parry is the chair of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone nation and is a great-grandson of Chief Sagwitch.

2 The Church History Museum acquired the scroll in 2017, where it awaits display. Steven L. Olsen, senior historic sites curator in the Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, brought the panorama scroll to our attention and encouraged this paper.

3 Instead of terms like “native peoples” or “Native Americans,” most nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints used the term “Lamanite” in reference to native peoples of the Americas. For complexities attending the usage of this term, see John-Charles Duffy, “The Use of ‘Lamanite’ in Official LDS Discourse,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34 (Winter 2008): 118–67.

4 E. T. City, north of the present-day city of Tooele, was named for early settler E. T. Benson. The location is now known as Lake Point.

5 Scott R. Christensen, *Sagwitch: Shoshone Chieftain, Mormon Elder, 1882–1887* (1999), 26. For more about late nineteenth-century Shoshone culture, see Leonard J. Arrington, *History of Idaho* (1994), 1:45–9.

6 Christensen 30.

7 Christensen 57–8; Arrington 1:268. Beaver Creek was soon renamed Battle Creek (Franklin County, Idaho), and the event was labeled the Battle of Bear River.

8 George W. Dodge to C. Delano, Secretary of the Interior, 10 Oct 1871, “Letters, Utah,” Roll 903, as cited in Christensen 221, n107; Christensen 77–81.

9 The date on the back appears to be 10-1871, though it is difficult to read, even with multispectral imaging.

10 Richard L. Jensen and Richard G. Oman, C. C. A. Christensen, 1831–1912: *Mormon Immigrant Artist* (1984), 17.

11 In Utah Territory, Huntington joined Parley P. Pratt’s company to explore southern Utah in 1849 and became the first Latter-day Saint–Indian interpreter. Latter-day Saints established Fort Supply in Shoshone country in 1853. During the ensuing winter, many Shoshone sought refuge with the Latter-day Saint settlers. Looking on this as an opportunity to make proselytizing inroads, the Latter-day Saints tried to learn as much as they could from the Shoshone regarding their marriage customs, burial rites, and the tribal roles of the medicine men. They also studied the Shoshone language, and that year Huntington published his *Few Words in the Shoshone or Snak Dialect*. Huntington helped negotiate peace treaties at Battle Creek in Utah County (today’s Pleasant Grove) and in Fillmore around 1855—and following the Black Hawk War in 1868. See “Dimick Baker Huntington,” *Early Mormon Missionaries*, online.

12 R. Devan Jensen, “Philo Dibble’s Dream of a Gallery in Zion,” *Journal of Mormon History* 44.4 (Oct 2018): 19–39.

13 Wodziwob (“Gray Hair”) was a Northern Paiute who claimed to have traveled in a trance to another world, where he learned that Indians could revitalize their culture through a series of rituals, and Ghost Dance teachings and Latter-day Saint millennial doctrines mingled to a degree. Gregory Smoak, *Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century* (2006), 131; see also “Ghost Dance,” *United States History*, online. The Reverend George W. Dodge was appointed special agent to the Western, Northwestern, and Gosiute tribes of Utah and Nevada in October 1871 and, in that role, met frequently with representatives of the various Northwestern bands.

14 George W. Dodge to C.I.A., 24 Jul 1872, Interior, “Letters, Utah,” Roll 903, as cited in Christensen 222, n17.

15 George Washington Hill, “An Indian Vision,” *Juvenile Instructor*, Jan



1877, 11. Born March 5, 1822, in Athens, Ohio, Hill was baptized a Latter-day Saint in June 1847. In 1849 he was tasked with helping Church emigration at the Missouri River, returning to Utah Territory in 1850 at the end of his emigration mission. See "George Washington Hill," *Early Mormon Missionaries*, online.

16 During the April 1855 General Conference of the Church, Brigham Young called 160 missionaries to preach to the Indians. He had appointed 27 of those men to proselytize among the buffalo-hunting Indians of the Bannock, Shoshone, and Flathead nations, whose territories lay north of Utah Territory. Among them was George W. Hill. The men departed from Ogden for that missionary service on May 18, 1855.

The missionary party traveled to the banks of the Salmon River at a site where the Bannock, Shoshone, Nez Perce, and Flathead met each summer to gamble and trade horses ("Salmon River Mission Journal,"

WASHAKIE—
CHIEF OF THE
SHOSHONE,
SCULPTURE BY
R.V. GREEVES,
AT THE
BUFFALO BILL
CENTER OF
THE WEST,
CODY,
WYOMING

Church History Library; also online). Bannock Chief Shou-woo-koo, also known as Le Grand Coquin, greeted the Latter-day Saints warmly and said they could settle in the area. Latter-day Saint settlers worked very hard to catch salmon, plant crops, and build a fort that they called Fort Limhi (after the Nephite Limhi, who lived among the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon). The Latter-day Saints began holding classes to learn the Shoshone language, and Hill began teaching tribal members the restored gospel in early May. The first Bannock converts received baptism on May 29. Eventually fifty-five Indians joined the Church ("Salmon River Mission Journal," 29 May 1855; David L. Bigler, *Fort Limhi: The Mormon Adventure in Oregon Territory, 1855–1858* [2003], 47–9, 74, 102–4).

17 Chief Sagwitch, as cited in George Richard Hill, "Events in the Lives of George Washington and Cynthia Stewart Hill, Utah Pioneers of 1847, As Recorded by Their Son George Richard Hill," 54, Joel Edward Ricks Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

18 Brigham Young to George Washington Hill, as cited in Ralph O. Brown, "The Life and Missionary Labors of George Washington Hill" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956), 59.

19 George Washington Hill to Brigham Young, 6 May 1873, Young, "General Correspondence, Incoming, 1840–1877," "General Letters, 1840–1877," Church History Library.

20 George Washington Hill to Dimick Huntington, 7 May 1873, Young, "General Correspondence, Incoming, 1840–1877," "General Letters, 1840–1877," Church History Library.

21 Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, vol. 7, 1 January 1871–31 December 1880 (1985), 135, entry for 7 May 1873.

22 Christensen 96–7.

23 Christensen 105. Some Shoshone families remained in Franklin, while others returned to the Bear River area midway between present-day Plymouth and Tremonton (see Christensen 98–9).

24 Christensen 104.

25 Diary of Frederick Kesler, 1874–1877, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah; also online. Jonathan A. Stapley kindly provided this reference.

26 Dimick B. Huntington to Joseph F. Smith, 6 Jun 1875, in *Millennial Star*, 6 Jul 1875, 426.

27 "Civilization Among the Indians," *Deseret Evening News*, 22 Jul 1875.

28 George Washington Hill to Brigham Young, 25 Aug 1875, Young, "General Correspondence, Incoming, 1840–1877," "General Letters, 1840–1877," Church History Library.

29 "Do the Mormons Mean War?," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 16 Jul 1874; "Apprehension of Trouble with the Mormon Indians," *Arizona Sentinel* 14 Aug 1875; see also Brigham D. Madsen, *Corinne: The Gentile Capital of Utah* (1980), 272–89.

30 Madsen 285–7.

31 Christensen 140–50.

32 Charles E. Dibble, "The Mormon Mission to the Shoshone Indians, Part Three," *Utah Humanities Review* 1 (Jul 1947): 284.

33 Ojibwa, "19th Century Mormon Missionaries & the Shoshone," online.

34 Christensen 174–7.

35 Darren B. Parry, remarks at San Juan Freedom Fest, Blanding, Utah, 9 Sep 2017.



Other Works

BY C. C. A. CHRISTENSEN

BY LAURA ALLRED HURTADO

In addition to *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*, the Church History Museum collection has over fifty other works by C. C. A. Christensen. The following section highlights several of these additional works, including a selection from the series of paintings commissioned by the Church's Sunday School, a variety of paintings showing the trials of early Latter-day Saints, and paintings that capture Christensen's experiences as an immigrant.

SUGAR CREEK

(1885)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN

OIL ON CANVAS

14.125 IN. X 22.125 IN. (LDS 93-169)

CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Christensen was committed to depicting the struggle of the early Latter-day Saint pioneers. Describing *Sugar Creek*, Richard Oman wrote, "In early February of 1846, thousands of Latter-day Saints began the exodus from Nauvoo that would eventually take them west to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. The first camp after crossing the Mississippi River from Nauvoo was on Sugar Creek in Iowa Territory. The stark trees and the snow-covered land emphasize the intense suffering from cold weather and inadequate preparations experienced by these early pioneers. The 'Camp of Israel' moved on from Sugar Creek in early March."¹ *Sugar Creek* was gifted by C. C. A. Christensen to his eldest son, Charles John Christensen. It was included in two Church History Museum exhibitions, *Masterworks: C. C. A. Christensen, 1831–1912*, and *Mormon Immigrant Artist*.





CHRIST IN AMERICA

(1903)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON BOARD
12 IN. X 18 IN. (LDS 2010-37)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

This painting, completed in 1903, returns to the topic of Christ in America as found in *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*. Both paintings depict Christ, dressed in white, at the center of the composition with his arm pointed heavenward. Here, Christ is surrounded by the Nephites, some of whom wear crowns of leaves, kneeling to honor him. Christensen appears to be drawing on practices of the nineteenth-century *picturesque*, one of which was the painter's including within the painting—regardless of the painting's primary subject or time period—Greek temples *in ruin* (used in this case, obviously, to suggest the destruction occasioned by earthquakes prior to Christ's appearance). The twentieth-century illustrator John Scott followed the practice of the *picturesque* in his monumental treatment of the same subject—the appearance of Christ to the Nephites.









THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP (1890)

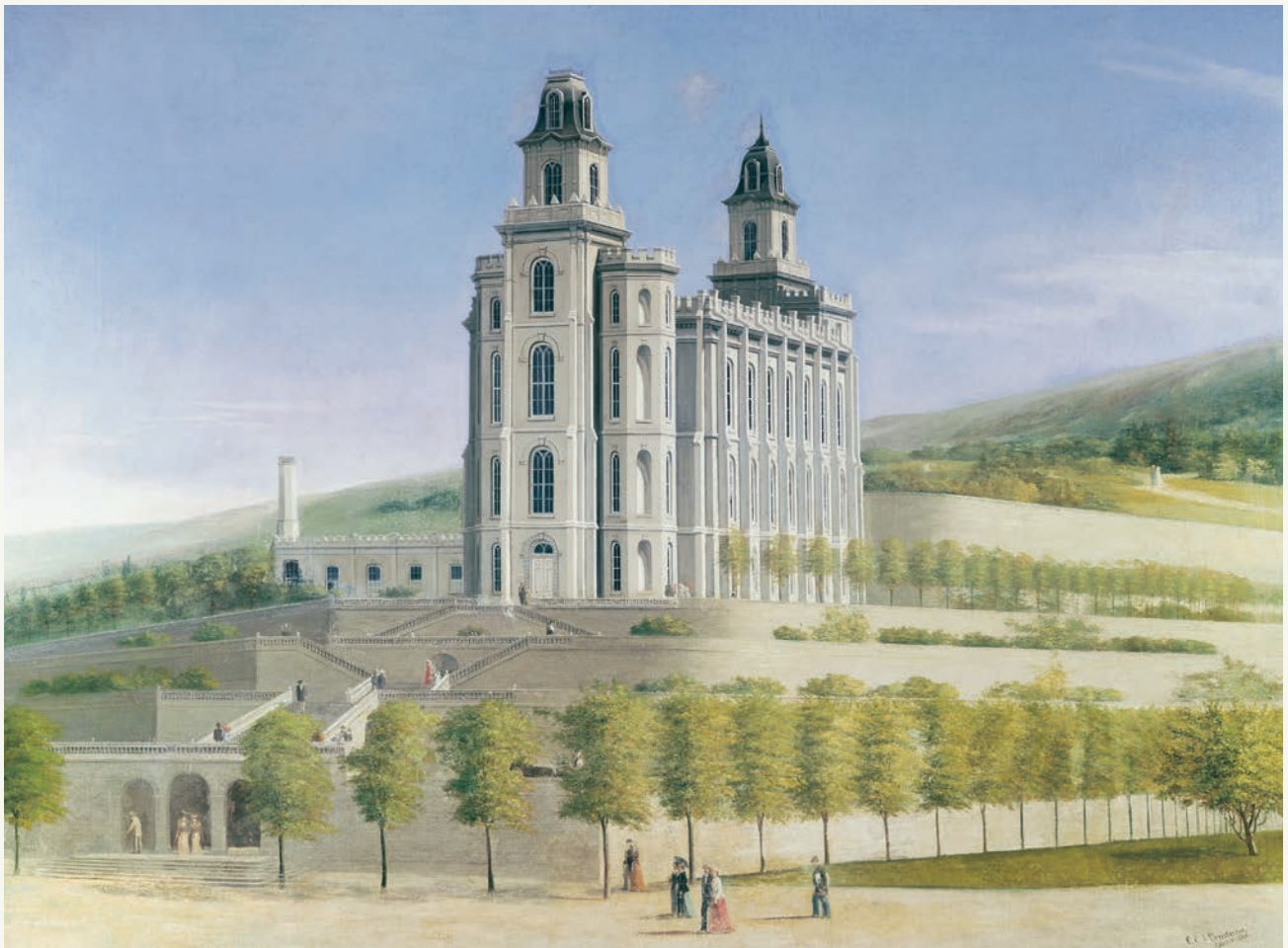
CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON
CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON BOARD
24.5 IN. X 18.25 IN. (LDS 55-925)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

The *Building of the Ship* is part of a series of works (including *Christ in America*) which depicted events in the Book of Mormon and which was commissioned by the Church in behalf of the Deseret Sunday School Union. Christensen was one of the artists selected following a competition sponsored by the Sunday School. A Boston firm then produced colored lithographed reproductions based on several paintings by Christensen and one by George Ottinger. These were distributed throughout the Church as visual aids packets for teachers. *The Building of the Ship* became chart 7 in this packet and depicts the family of Lehi building the vessel that will take them to the Promised Land. The corresponding panel in *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]* captures the tumult and aggression that arises among the family on the sea.

RENDERING OF MANTI TEMPLE (1889)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON
CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON CANVAS
54 IN. X 73 IN. (LDS 55-2400)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

The *Rendering of Manti Temple* is presented in conceptual majesty in Christensen's 1889 painting. Ground was broken for the temple in 1877, and the temple was dedicated in 1888 by Wilford Woodruff, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The temple's walls are depicted in a lighter shade than the beige sandstone material would appear when completed. The retaining wall east of the temple was built, but the elaborate granite staircase on the west and the additional retaining walls were never constructed. When the painting was rediscovered, it was found that the staircase and lower walls had been unprofessionally painted over with green paint to make the grounds resemble the grassy hill on which the temple sits. The painting was restored to its original state and now hangs in the lobby of the Manti Temple. The oldest remaining mural in a temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is C. C. A. Christensen's Manti Temple Creation Room.





NEPHI'S VISION OF THE VIRGIN AND THE SON OF GOD

(1890)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON
CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON BOARD
24.5 IN. X 18.5 IN. (LDS 55-923)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Also part of the series commissioned by the Sunday School, *Nephi's Vision of the Virgin and the Son of God* became chart 5 in the subsequent picture packet. *Nephi's Vision* shows influence of Danish religious iconography and, like *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*, blends scriptural texts, given that the painting depicts a Book of Mormon vision reference to a New Testament subject. It is difficult to know from the images themselves how prescriptive the Sunday School board may have been in dictating the composition of each painting in the series they commissioned, and further research is required to unpack the relationship between patron and artist.

EMIGRATION SHIP (1867)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON
CHRISTENSEN
WATERCOLOR
6.75 IN. X 10.5 IN. (LDS 55-2847)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Painted just ten years after Christensen's immigration to the United States, *Emigration Ship* depicts a fully-rigged ship with an American flag flying counter to the wind direction. While it is inconclusive, it is likely that the painting depicts the emigrant ship *Westmoreland*, the ship on which he and Elise and more than five hundred other Scandinavian Saints sailed in 1857. Carl and Elise were married aboard the *Westmoreland*.





SCENE FROM FJORD ON NORWAY'S WEST COAST (1904)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON
CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON BOARD
24.5 IN. X 18.25 IN. (LDS 91-14)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Depicting the countryside of his wife's youth and of his own missionary service, this painting captures the beauty of Norway with its majestic fjords—long, narrow, deep inlets set between high cliffs. Even years after their immigration, they must have longed to return to this land. Elise was from Frederickshald (now Halden), located on the southeastern side of Norway, a town known for nearby fjords. At the time this was painted, Christensen was serving as temporary editor of the Danish Latter-day Saint newspaper, *Bikuben*, while its editor, Andrew Jenson, was serving a mission.

THE SEPARATION OF THE NEPHITES AND THE LAMANITES

(1890)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON BOARD

24.5 IN. X 18.5 IN. (LDS 55-930)

CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Later becoming chart 10 of the Sunday School picture packet, *The Separation of the Nephites and the Lamanites* focuses on the division of the family of Lehi and thus the origin of the separation of Lehi's family into two separate peoples. Given the focus on familial division in *Untitled [Huntington/Lamanite Panorama]*, the recurrence of this subject in the Sunday School's Book of Mormon series seems significant.







INDIAN ENCAMPMENT AT MANTI, (CA. 1870-1889)

CARL CHRISTIAN ANTON CHRISTENSEN
OIL ON BOARD
35 IN. X 72 IN. (LDS 55-1087)
CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Indian *Encampment at Manti* (ca. 1870-1889) hangs inside the Manti Utah Temple. While Christensen exaggerates race in the work, it is a sympathetic image. The community is depicted as organized, cooperative, industrious, and peaceful. The point of view of the artist is also noteworthy, given that Christensen positions himself among the community rather than outside it as a colonial observer. In the far background, wagon trains are circled.

JOSEPH SMITH PREACHING TO THE INDIANS

(1890)

WILLIAM ARMITAGE

OIL ON CANVAS

115.2 IN. X 168 IN. (LDS 55-1883)

CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Another painting depicting American Indians that was once displayed in a temple—in this case the Salt Lake Temple—is William Armitage's *Joseph Smith Preaching to the Indians* (1890). According to historian David Grua, Armitage's composition isn't original and was likely a "popular revision of one of the panels from C. C. A. Christensen's now famous *Mormon Panorama* series."³ Armitage, an English convert, also painted panoramas and exhibited them throughout the Utah Territory. In this Armitage painting, Smith preaches with bold bravado to a crowd of mostly male American Indians whose expressions vary from guarded and distrusting to shocked and perhaps even provoked. But in all instances they are engaged with the central figure, listening to his distinct message regarding their history.

Joseph Smith Preaching to the Indians also resembles an early lithograph by non-Mormon artist John McGahey. In all three works—Christensen's *Mormon Panorama*, McGahey's lithograph, and Armitage's *Joseph Smith Preaching*—Joseph is the obvious central figure; in all three, he takes a singularly bold stance. However, there are marked differences among them. Grua continues, "First, while in Armitage's painting there is only one other [European] man (presumably Armitage himself), in Christensen's panorama Joseph is backed by five figures including a woman, child, and a domesticated dog, suggesting the civility of the message, sent to colonize and domesticate the so-called 'noble savage.' Furthering this suggestion, Christensen portrays the Indians as distinctly red-faced and generalized, uniform and stereotyped. Rather than







C. C. A. CHRISTENSEN (1831–1912), *JOSEPH PREACHING TO THE INDIANS*, C.1878, TEMPERA ON MUSLIN, 76 1/2 X 112 3/4 INCHES. BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF THE GRANDCHILDREN OF C.C.A. CHRISTENSEN, 1970.



JOHN MCGAHEY TINTED LITHOGRAPH, C.1843 ©TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

reflecting the cultural nuances of various tribes, Christensen paints the 'Red Man' as perceived specifically by an outsider. What persists, however, is the sense of listening, of engagement, of Joseph's words having a distinct value to this community."⁴

Neither Armitage nor Christensen witnessed Smith preaching to the Indians in Nauvoo. However, historical accuracy is rarely

the primary goal of history paintings. Instead, such paintings create a grand narrative underscoring the importance of central figures within the crucial events they create or influence. Even in its most exact rendering of a person or event, a painting—by its very nature—can never be an objective let alone complete depiction of what "really happened." Documentary photographs themselves—which are often perceived as "truth"—fail to be perfectly objective or complete. But the viewer looking for *representative* Truth will discover it within clearly, strategically, and aesthetically composed historical paintings.

The goal, then, of the three works in question is not to record an important moment as it existed in reality, but rather to elevate the position and mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The gospel of Jesus Christ as restored through the Prophet Joseph is eventually taken to all nations—almost as if Joseph were preaching to each nation in person. All of Christensen's works, as a collective body, position Joseph (and, by extension, the Church of Jesus Christ) as the ultimate champions of marginalized peoples.⁵ ▣

1 Richard Oman, "Sage Creek," *Church History Department Museum Catalog*, catalog entry.

2 "Eliza Rosalia Christensen," *Ephraim Enterprise*, 12 May 1910. Available online.

3 Laura Allred Hurtado and David Grua, "Painting the Mythical and the Heroic: *Joseph Preaches to the American Indians*," *Juvenile Instructor* website, 19 Nov 2013, online.

4 Hurtado and Grua.

5 Hurtado and Grua.



HANDCART PIONEERS

C. C. A. CHRISTENSEN (1831–1912)
OIL ON CANVAS, 27 IN. X 37 IN.
MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY
AND ART

Handcart Pioneers is one of the best-known and most beloved of C. C. A. Christensen's pioneer-themed artwork. While showcasing Christensen's limitations as an artist as well as his strengths, it wonderfully captures his personal experience as a member of the 7th Handcart Company—comprised mostly of Scandinavian Saints—that crossed the plains in 1857.

Christensen's skill as a landscape painter is seen in how he portrays the prairie's variety and character—a lush harmony of subtle rises and vales. The textured details of the trees in the foreground contrast with the soft impressionistic trees in the distance.


The stream becomes an effectual road paralleling the stream of pioneers emerging from the horizon. The natural and human streams cross in the foreground, adding tension and balance to the larger painting.

Of course, the humans traversing the prairie and the stream are the focus of the painting. Bright colors draw attention to the people and their diverse activities. Christensen's recollection of clothing worn by the Scandinavian Saints adds authenticity and interest.

Most remarkable are the details in the scene that only an actual handcart pioneer would have thought to include, and they suggest real and very personal stories. In the lower left, the boy blowing on the kindling is instantly recognizable by anyone who has been around boys and campfires. To the right, a forked tree branch props up the handle of a handcart. Further

right, a woman collects “buffalo chips,” the prairie's omnipresent source of campfire fuel. Center left, a young mother nurses a baby; other pioneers nearby point to approaching riders on horseback, possibly Native Americans. At the center a young man has tied a rope to the handle of his family's handcart to help his father pull the load. Beside them, a child is being carried across the stream on an older brother's shoulders; to the right an old man makes his solitary but assured crossing. And on the far right a woman sits down to tie up her skirt or underclothing before crossing the stream.

Christensen's Saints embody a hardy, forward-pressing determination and optimism. The longer we gaze on the scene the more we appreciate the vitality of Christensen's art and his passion for the pioneer experience that he was determined to preserve. ▣



The Spirit of God equips mankind with many different talents or abilities for the benefit and joy of all his children on earth, just as he gave them the gospel with all its spiritual gifts, although not everyone makes use of them to the same degree or at the same time. He [the Spirit of God] equipped some with great wisdom to discover the hidden treasures of nature in the area of science. He endowed others as architects, engineers, speakers, statesmen, poets, and artists. Others he gave abilities as agriculturalists and cattle husbandmen, as well as genius in the various trades 'but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he [the Spirit of God] will.' 1 Cor. 12:11."

From C. C. A. Christensen, *"De skønne Kunster"* (1892); tr. Richard L. Jensen, *"The Fine Arts"* (1983).